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President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

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Closing of the segment

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/73/78-E/2018/54 and E/2018/L.14)

1. **Ms. Bassols Delgado** (Spain) said that her country attached great importance to compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. In 2018, it had organized the first annual meeting on international humanitarian law for members of the Security Council, which had focused on the provision of medical care in conflicts and how to improve the implementation of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016). With greater political will, it would be possible to reduce the number of attacks against sick and injured persons, as well as medical personnel and facilities.

2. Humanitarian crises required political solutions. Only by ensuring peace, dialogue and respect for international humanitarian law would it be possible to address needs for food and protection. However, competition for humanitarian funds carried the risk that a focus on the highest-profile crises would come at the expense of other, neglected ones. For that reason, Spain had co-hosted, with Sweden, a side event on trends in humanitarian funding.

3. While Spain welcomed the 2018 draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2018/L.14), it was concerned about a regression in the important area of sexual and reproductive health. It was regrettable that there was no mention of one of the most effective measures in that regard, the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health, which was helping to save the lives of women and children in serious humanitarian situations. Nevertheless, Spain welcomed the additions to the draft resolution on youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as the improvements made with respect to early warning and early response, sexual violence and education.

4. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Observer for Brazil) said that the consequences of humanitarian emergencies, particularly the displacement of large populations, should be addressed in a humane and people-centred manner that considered local capacities. As local and national non-governmental organizations received only a very small proportion of all international humanitarian assistance, Brazil commended the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to support existing national networks.

5. In 2018, conflicts had led to an increase in humanitarian needs. Brazil had continued to offer humanitarian visas to those displaced by the war in Syria and had contributed food and medicine through its United Nations partners. The only way to reduce the need for such aid and prevent the resurgence of crisis was to work towards lasting political solutions. Noting that the extreme weather events of the previous year had been exacerbated by climate change, he welcomed the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to promote preparedness, risk analysis and resilience. The Central Emergency Response Fund, to which Brazil had been a frequent contributor, was a financial tool that allowed for quick and flexible responses to emergencies.

6. His delegation also welcomed new elements in the draft resolution, such as the emphasis on the protection of children and persons with disabilities and the importance of risk-informed social protection systems and emergency agricultural support. Brazil had launched humanitarian cooperation initiatives such as the Purchase from Africans for Africa programme, which helped African countries respond to food and agricultural emergencies, and it supported the rehabilitation of vulnerable communities by promoting local solutions, purchasing local food and supporting local markets. In conclusion, he commended the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus through the establishment of a Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation.

7. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that General Assembly resolution 46/182 should remain the cornerstone of the United Nations system for humanitarian response. States should play a leading role in initiating and coordinating humanitarian response on their own territory and should bear the primary responsibility for providing for those in need. The international community should respect sovereignty and the consent of the host country when providing assistance, as straying from those principles led to the subordination of aid to military and political agendas.

8. Over the past 20 years, the number of natural and industrial disasters had doubled. In multiple regions, acute food insecurity posed a problem and there was a gap between humanitarian demand and supply. Humanitarian partners should demonstrate flexibility and seek new and effective forms of emergency response to large-scale catastrophes. Cooperation in

humanitarian response and disaster prevention was important for providing stable and lasting development.

9. Political approaches were key to reducing the need for humanitarian assistance. According to United Nations figures, up to 90 per cent of humanitarian needs were linked to conflict; it was therefore imperative for the international community to address the root causes and seek diplomatic and political resolutions to conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The United Nations should also support national dialogue and the fight against international terrorism. The Russian Federation was actively participating in processes to that end.

10. **Ms. Luo** Jin (China) said that humanitarian assistance should be provided with full respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the recipient countries. Furthermore, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality must be observed, and international and national laws must be obeyed. Humanitarian issues should not be politicized. China attached great importance to international cooperation in the humanitarian field and supported the centrality of the United Nations in guiding and coordinating humanitarian assistance.

11. Investment in long-term development and enhancing the capacity of States to become self-reliant would help prevent humanitarian crises and reduce humanitarian needs. Peace would be sustainable only when grounded in development and security. China hoped that the international community would increase its financial and technical assistance to developing countries, taking into account their specific needs and realities, so that they could better respond to natural disasters and climate change. It furthermore hoped that disaster relief measures such as technology transfer, education and training would translate into overall improvements in development. Special attention should be paid to children, women and persons with disabilities in responding to humanitarian crises.

12. China, the world's largest developing country, was often at the mercy of a wide range of serious natural disasters. While working hard to respond to those disasters, the country also actively joined international humanitarian relief efforts. In 2017, her Government had provided almost ¥3 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance to 48 countries and six international organizations. It had also provided timely assistance to many disaster-stricken countries through its cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), supporting country-level efforts to address food crises, carry out post-disaster reconstruction and improve nutrition and health care for women and children.

13. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that resilience in humanitarian crises should be fostered through long-term approaches that focused on development as well as prevention, preparedness and the analysis of vulnerabilities. Effective decisions in humanitarian crises must be based on verified and updated information. Humanitarian interventions could be enhanced through information exchange between Member States and humanitarian actors, which would enable the optimal allocation of resources and lead to a reduction in suffering. In that regard, his delegation regretted the obstacles faced by humanitarian staff as well as the politicization of the suffering of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. It hoped that measures would be taken to allow humanitarian bodies, principally the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Human Rights Council, to carry out their mandates.

14. Despite a significant increase in contributions under the consolidated appeal process, the financing gap remained significant. Humanitarian actors must work to improve coordination, streamline funding and promote accountability. The effectiveness of humanitarian aid was largely dependent on access to affected populations; in particular, the collection of data on vulnerable populations was indispensable for preventing the misappropriation of humanitarian aid, a reprehensible crime and a serious human rights violation which had been exposed in a number of credible reports. Host countries and humanitarian actors, including partners in the field, shouldered the primary responsibility for preventing such misappropriation. Lastly, his delegation strongly condemned attacks on humanitarian workers. The international community was legally and morally obliged to ensure their safety.

15. **Mr. Awad** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government was committed to providing humanitarian assistance to all Syrians equally, and to cooperating with the United Nations and humanitarian partners. The Syrian Government maintained its principled position that emergency humanitarian aid must be provided in accordance with the guiding principles of the United Nations, in particular, respect for national sovereignty.

16. Unfortunately, the draft resolution that the Council would consider later in the meeting was not balanced, and was consistent with the interventionist positions held by certain States on the subject of humanitarian aid. Those States expressed concern about deteriorating conditions in some countries while intentionally

ignoring others in order to politicize humanitarian crises and obscure the root causes of those crises. The draft resolution thus paid more attention to humanitarian aid delivery during armed conflict than during natural disasters and neglected the operational aspects that were supposed to be of special concern to the Council. Furthermore, it contained paragraphs on "protection" and other controversial concepts while including only one paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and only passing references to such issues as technology and capacity-building that were critical for addressing humanitarian crises, poverty and food security. Although the draft resolution did not consider terrorist acts to be a major cause of humanitarian crises, it was nevertheless clear to all that terrorism, especially as perpetrated by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Nusrah Front and Boko Haram, was the primary driver of those crises.

17. The draft resolution contained no reference to the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures imposed by certain States on developing countries, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Those Western States and international forces used their economic influence to further their interventionist political ends. Syria also wished to express its reservations regarding the paragraph on the World Humanitarian Summit, as it rejected all the outcomes of that Summit.

18. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that her country remained a stalwart defender of child and maternal health and well-being in humanitarian emergencies and had contributed to efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. It had also championed young people's access to education in conflict and crisis-affected countries.

19. As the scale, complexity and gravity of humanitarian crises around the world continued to grow, particularly in situations of armed conflict, the international community must renew its commitment to political solutions and finding ways to alleviate suffering. In 2017, the United States had been the world's largest humanitarian donor, providing billions in humanitarian assistance, including $990 million in emergency funds in response to food insecurity and famine and nearly $429 million in health assistance in humanitarian contexts. In addition, it had provided financial support to global and field-level programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. However, global humanitarian funding could not keep pace with the scale of need; the financing gap must be closed without relying solely on the sustained generosity of traditional donors. The United States would continue to encourage contributions from new donors and the private sector, as well as technical assistance and support for emerging donors.

20. Greater efforts were needed to promote compliance with international laws and norms. The United States drew on its influence and subject-matter expertise to press Governments and parties to conflicts to uphold obligations under international law. It had also made efforts to keep the humanitarian consequences of crises in Yemen, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the agenda of the Security Council. In that connection, she welcomed the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 2417 (2018) on hunger and armed conflict, as well as ongoing efforts to reform the humanitarian system, including through implementation of the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing. Humanitarian and development actors must work more closely together to reduce long-term need and restore the self-reliance and productivity of the countries they assisted.

21. **Mr. Kazi** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that in order to address humanitarian emergencies, better coherence and coordination was needed among Member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. Sustainable development remained the most effective preventive measure for many humanitarian crises, including those related to forced displacement. The international community should therefore focus on enhancing resilience and reducing dependence on humanitarian aid.

22. Many developing countries faced financial and technological constraints that limited their ability to effectively address humanitarian challenges. The international community should develop mechanisms to provide expertise and flexible, multi-year financing. Bangladesh acknowledged the role of women as first responders in humanitarian crises and the need to further strengthen gender-responsive policies on disaster risk reduction. It was concerned at the attacks on humanitarian personnel, convoys, medical and peacekeeping personnel and civilian infrastructure and the use of starvation as a tool of war.

23. The recent exodus of the Rohingya people from Myanmar was considered the fastest-growing displacement crisis in the world. Bangladesh was currently host to over 1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, 58 per cent of whom were children. The Government of Bangladesh was providing them with basic humanitarian assistance and protection and was improving their shelter in preparation for the onset of the monsoon season. To ensure the safe and sustainable return of the Rohingya to Rakhine state, the authorities in Myanmar must create a conducive

environment on the ground. Bangladesh would seek the engagement of the international community in the implementation of agreements between Bangladesh and Myanmar for the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya.

24. **Ms. Alateibi** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country welcomed the momentum that had been seen with respect to gender and age mainstreaming. The gender and age marker and the gender policy handbook developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (IASC) were powerful tools for translating norms into standard procedures. The United Arab Emirates hoped that in coming years, there would be greater linkages between gender and age scores and personal performance reviews so that there was a strong incentive for the staff of all IASC members to keep up the good work. Her Government also encouraged the development of a mandatory disability marker to identify the needs of persons with disabilities.

25. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the growing focus on anticipatory finance, including forecast-based financing, which used weather forecasts to trigger funding. Such tools had tremendous potential to save lives and reduce costs. The new request in the draft resolution for the Secretary-General to report on United Nations plans to implement such mechanisms was a strong indication of the Organization's shift towards preventive measures.

26. The United Arab Emirates supported an increase in the use of pooled funding mechanisms to foster system-wide coordination, prioritize needs and reduce competition for funds among United Nations agencies. It had seen the immediate impact of its $465 million contribution to the humanitarian response plan for Yemen under the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which had enabled the United Nations system to work cost-effectively to meet the needs of the most vulnerable while also improving and streamlining reporting. It was a blueprint for Grand Bargain implementation that put the focus on the affected population.

27. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that, according to the report of the Secretary-General, the total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict and violence had reached a record 65 million by the end of 2016, 40 million of whom were internally displaced. That was not only a humanitarian problem but also a problem for development and a serious obstacle to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Tangible efforts must be made to tackle the root causes of displacement, manage and prevent conflicts, and protect civilian populations.

28. Azerbaijan supported efforts to increase global attention to displaced persons. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants underlined the need to develop effective strategies for preventing and reducing displacement. That document, adopted by Heads of State and Government, must help revitalize efforts to alleviate suffering.

29. Azerbaijan, which had significant numbers of internally displaced persons as a result of foreign occupation, had proven that it was entirely possible to improve the socioeconomic conditions of displaced persons without jeopardizing their secure return. Substantial financial resources had been allocated to address their needs. Accommodation for 265,000 displaced persons had been built in the previous decade, and poverty and unemployment had been significantly reduced. Such progress had been commended in a number of United Nations documents, including a report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. Special Rapporteurs had made four official information-gathering visits to Azerbaijan in order to better understand the situation of displaced persons there.

30. **Ms. Fisher-Tsin** (Observer for Israel) said that 2018 had been a year of devastating humanitarian crises and natural disasters that had left millions of people injured or living in dire conditions. While it was not possible to control nature, the international community should prepare for natural disasters before they occurred. For many years, Israel had been at the forefront of global humanitarian response and disaster relief, and was always among the first to send emergency teams to all parts of the world. Its expertise in emergency response and collaboration with local Governments had produced results. The previous month, shortly after the lethal eruption of a volcano in Guatemala, a team of Israeli specialists, which included experts on burns and respiratory diseases, had arrived with medicine and essential equipment.

31. In 2018, the country would celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV). When it came to humanitarian emergencies, the Agency focused on the complete cycle of the various stages of each emergency and the various actors, including emergency responders and the civilian population, with the goal of helping authorities formulate a national response plan to crises. As a direct outcome of growing global threats, community resilience had become a key policy issue and a goal at the national and local levels. A community's ability to return to a business-as-usual pattern depended on its capacity to withstand, adapt to and recover from crises. Resilience went hand in hand

with capacity-building towards community development and was an important aspect of achieving long-term sustainable development.

32. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre had developed many projects to enhance humanitarian assistance to children in armed conflict. Of particular note was its work towards the rehabilitation of child soldiers in Yemen who had been forced into battle by Houthi militias. The Government of Saudi Arabia had also contributed $1 billion to the restoration of legitimacy in Yemen and $250 million to the United Nations humanitarian response plan for that country. In order to demonstrate its commitment to alleviating the humanitarian plight of its brothers in Yemen and mitigating climate risks, Saudi Arabia had launched a comprehensive humanitarian operations plan in the governorate of Socotra for those affected by Tropical Cyclone Mekunu.

33. Saudi Arabia attached great importance to strengthening local capacities and contributing to humanitarian action. During the previous five months, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre had donated $1.7 billion dollars to more than 419 projects in 37 recipient countries. The country had also made efforts to secure a good quality of life for people at home and abroad. The Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 and National Transformation Programme and its financial balance programmes were ambitious plans aimed at contributing to humanitarian work and providing a decent standard of living for individuals, which would in turn contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that all stakeholders involved in the management of crises and natural disasters must comply with the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182. A key lesson learned was that States needed to focus on prevention in order to avert suffering, forced displacement and the death of millions affected by crises. United Nations specialized agencies and programmes must continue to promote the optimum use of resources and to support developing countries that requested assistance, including within the context of the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, through capacity-building and balanced and sustainable support for focused programmes. Member States, United Nations agencies and programmes, civil society and other stakeholders should all work together to reduce the needs of vulnerable groups and in turn help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable peace while leaving no one behind.

35. **Mr. Nour** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that upholding human dignity, a fundamental principle of well-governed migration, was easily eroded when population movements resulted from necessity rather than choice or when livelihoods were destroyed. Migrants and displaced persons were among the most vulnerable and were often left out of planning and development initiatives. They were among the worst affected during crises, had specific vulnerabilities due to their status and were more exposed to hazards and less prepared. The International Organization for Migration therefore reaffirmed its commitment to help prevent displacement crises, and, in cases where displacement was necessary to save lives, to mitigate its impact and duration.

36. Despite the significant strides made in the area of humanitarian reform, States and the humanitarian assistance community recognized that more needed to be done. There was a consensus that responding to internal displacement was beyond the capacity of any single entity; it required a collective response that embraced a holistic, contextually flexible and multidisciplinary approach, as needs, risks and vulnerabilities reflected a combination of social, familial, structural and circumstantial factors. It was also important to recognize that migrants and displaced persons brought special skills and capacities with them and should therefore be empowered and supported to protect themselves from risk. Humanitarian assistance efforts should be need- and not mandate-driven. The increasing complexity of humanitarian policy reinforced the importance of leveraging the experience of different actors, including the private sector and civil society.

37. **Ms. Ghukasyan** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that, in addition to the conventional drivers of humanitarian emergencies, namely inter- and intra-State conflict and natural disasters, new drivers, such as unplanned urbanization and climate change, had surfaced. Those phenomena had far-reaching consequences for efforts to provide effective assistance. In future, more people would be affected by natural and man-made crises, and emerging threats would require new and smarter ways of preparing for emergencies.

38. IFRC welcomed the recommendation in the draft resolution to strengthen early-warning and early action efforts, including through innovative financing mechanisms such as forecast-based financing. Building on the experience of its National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC had established a global financing mechanism to secure predictable funding by extending the use of its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to cover early action and prevention. IFRC worked at

the community level to help people resist further shocks and improve their daily lives. Volunteers, particularly young persons, played an essential role in the work of IFRC and the organization continued to integrate them into its decision-making and programming.

39. Empowerment of local actors had become imperative for improving the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. With the commitments made under the Grand Bargain, localization of assistance had become a priority and there had been signs of more empowered local action. In conclusion, she said that local humanitarian action should be led by local actors, and called for cooperation in creating and sustaining that culture throughout the humanitarian system.

40. **Mr. Spoerri** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that his organization had developed tailored approaches to the issue of the urban displaced. Populations fleeing conflict were increasingly displaced to or within cities and faced challenges such as poor housing, limited access to services and economic insecurity. Urban internally-displaced persons were often poorer and more vulnerable than their non-displaced neighbours, having lost livelihoods, assets and social networks. Responding to urban displacement required a holistic approach that brought together municipalities, civil society, displaced persons, host communities, local businesses and donors. ICRC had led a study on urban displacement to better understand people's experiences of displacement and strengthen response. It called on States and other actors to develop better, data-driven responses to the challenges of urban displacement.

41. Responsibility for upholding the fundamental rules of war, including in counter-terrorism operations, fell to those on the front lines and to the community of States. Activities that were exclusively humanitarian must be excluded from the scope of application of criminal laws on terrorism; otherwise, the ability of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian actions to protect those in need would be significantly impeded.

42. Its work in protracted conflicts had demonstrated to ICRC that both short- and long-term approaches to fostering resilience were needed. There was a strong potential for synergies with development systems, as humanitarians could use the systems and services that had evolved for development purposes. However, whether a nexus between humanitarian and development action could be sustained had much to do with the methods of warfare employed and the extent of human displacement and disenfranchisement of populations.

43. **Ms. Khan** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that her organization was undergoing a profound transformation in order to deliver fast, effective and predictable responses to emergencies, but it needed better support. Progress had been made in strengthening coordination between the health and humanitarian communities. However, although initiatives such as the IASC health reactivation protocol for outbreaks, the United Nations crisis management policy and the World Bank pandemic emergency financing facility were useful systems, they were not enough in themselves. The world continued to face public health challenges, with outbreaks of diphtheria in Bangladesh, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Haiti, Indonesia and Ukraine; cholera in multiple countries in various regions; and yellow fever in Latin America and Nigeria.

44. WHO had contributed actively to systematic improvements in the humanitarian system by co-chairing the IASC task team on strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus with a focus on protracted contexts. IASC was the only coordination mechanism that allowed the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the Red Cross to shape a common understanding on humanitarian action, assess policies and ensure coherence in field support.

45. Concrete action was needed to address attacks on health-care personnel and facilities. In 2017, WHO had reported 320 such attacks in 20 countries, which had resulted in 242 deaths and 229 injured. WHO was working to end attacks through a project involving robust data collection and research on the impact of attacks on health-care delivery and health outcomes.

46. **Mr. Seymour** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that both the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Humanitarian Summit recognized the pivotal importance of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in achieving the objective of leaving no one behind. In light of the increasingly protracted nature of crises, the new way of working, set out in the World Humanitarian Summit Commitments to Action, highlighted the need for coordination between humanitarian and development actors with a view to preventing crises and reducing humanitarian need. Humanitarian and development actors must engage in policy discussions that adequately addressed the diverse needs of women and girls within crisis-affected populations.

47. Traditional crisis-response strategies had proved inadequate. To address that problem, viable, long-term solutions were needed that upheld the rights of affected populations and maintained their dignity.

Transformative change was needed to support the self-reliance and empowerment of women and girls and allow them to build a future of their own choosing. Safeguarding the contributions of women and girls led to positive social, political and economic outcomes for their entire communities.

48. **Ms. Marcaillou** (Director, United Nations Mine Action Service) said that, in many countries, the risks posed by explosive devices such as landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices curtailed the movements of civilian populations and humanitarian aid workers. The United Nations Mine Action Service led, coordinated and implemented humanitarian responses to that vulnerability in the world's most complex conflict environments.

49. The Mine Action Service had developed gender-sensitive risk education campaigns in South Sudan to reduce the vulnerability of women navigating the explosive hazards that affected their access to water and firewood. Removing explosive hazards from homes, streets and infrastructure in cities such as Mosul allowed families to return home and re-establish their business, reducing humanitarian need. Quick and appropriate assistance to victims of explosive attacks in Afghanistan helped them recover and rebuild their lives. The Mine Action Service called on Member States to consider humanitarian mine action at the earliest stages of planning and programming humanitarian response in conflict settings.

50. In its experience of coordinating humanitarian mine action, the Service had learned many lessons. One was that the humanitarian community was best served when it was involved in the strategic planning of a humanitarian response because, often, humanitarian mine action was a prerequisite for the delivery of other humanitarian aid. It had also learned that funding for humanitarian response was most effective when resources for mine action were considered in the broader picture and allocated at the outset.

51. **The President** asked how many landmines were unexploded.

52. **Ms. Marcaillou** (Director, United Nations Mine Action Service) said that it was impossible to say how many landmines were buried in the ground, as they were counted only as they were lifted. What was clear, however, was that 64 countries around the world were currently impacted by explosive hazards and the accident rate was the highest it had been since 1999, with 8,500 casualties reported in 2017 of whom 2,000 had been killed. It therefore remained a critical problem; the Mine Action Service and its partners were doing their best to mitigate those threats.

53. **Ms. Adam** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that parties to conflicts should honour their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and the civilian infrastructure vital to children's survival and dignity. Persistent disregard for humanitarian principles and international human rights and humanitarian law, including grave violations against children, directly challenged principles of humanity. Indiscriminate tactics of war, notably in urban and densely populated civilian areas, the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups, the detention and ill-treatment of children and the destruction of schools, hospitals and sanitation facilities all led to high numbers of child casualties.

54. UNICEF called for zero tolerance for denial of humanitarian access and attacks against humanitarian personnel. It also called for strengthened efforts to address the needs and vulnerabilities of the furthest left behind. To that end, UNICEF was committed to a systematic, strategic and programmatic approach that would accelerate results, but more predictable, flexible and unearmarked funding was needed. UNICEF had zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. With the support of Member States and other partners, it was setting up systems to prevent sexual abuse and ensure an appropriate response for victims at the field level, including community-based complaint mechanisms and assistance for victims.

Draft resolution E/2018/L.14: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

55. **The President** introduced draft resolution E/2018/L.14, which he had submitted on the basis of informal consultations.

56. **Mr. Cerutti** (Observer for Switzerland), co-facilitator, said that consultations on the draft resolution had been open and frank, which had facilitated progress in many areas. In paragraph 58, the word "Ecuador" after the word "Quito" had been removed by the editors of the text and should be reinserted, as that change had not been agreed in the room.

57. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that the editors had removed the reference to "Ecuador" in that paragraph because it was standard practice at the United Nations to refer solely to capitals without mentioning their countries. He hoped that the Council would take action on the draft resolution without adding the country name, in order to ensure consistency across draft resolutions adopted by the Council and other forums.

58. **Mr. Cerutti** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the request to reinsert "Ecuador" had already been agreed by the entire group earlier that day. There were other resolutions that mentioned the country alongside its capital. The word "Ecuador" should therefore be included.

59. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications. If he heard no objection, he took it that the Council wished to amend the draft resolution by reinserting the word "Ecuador".

60. *It was so decided.*

61. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position before the decision, said that her delegation would join the consensus on the draft resolution, which should contribute to improving the international humanitarian system. The United States had long been a world leader in providing humanitarian assistance to people in need and remained a stalwart defender of maternal and children's health.

62. While progress had been made on critical issues such as education in emergencies, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and tackling fraud in the system, the value of that forward movement quickly diminished if resolutions did not address the most pressing, high-impact issues. Some States continued to pursue policy agendas that were not conducive to international consensus. In particular, the draft resolution should more accurately address the primary drivers of humanitarian need, which were conflict and access constraints, rather than climate change or commodity prices.

63. The United States dissociated itself from consensus on the twenty-ninth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 15 and 20. It did not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor did it support abortion in its global health assistance. In the years since the International Conference on Population and Development, the terms "sexual and reproductive health services" and "sexual and reproductive health" had acquired connotations that ran counter to the consensus forged at the Conference and were used to promote abortion; the United States could therefore not accept their inclusion in the draft resolution. The United States would work with Member States of different regions to reach a consensus on new terminology that would better reflect common commitments regarding women's health needs. Women were whole persons with a broad range of health needs; United Nations policy should reflect that.

64. The United States was also unable to agree to the language in the twenty-ninth preambular paragraph, as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants contained numerous provisions that were inconsistent with United States immigration policy. It nonetheless remained engaged in the consultations on the draft programme of action for the global compact on refugees. The United States wished to reiterate its views as set out in previous explanations of position regarding climate change and the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework and technology transfer.

65. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.14, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

66. **Ms. Elgarf** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the resolution was a step forward for the most vulnerable groups in humanitarian emergencies, such as youth, persons with disabilities and older persons. The Group of 77 and China had put forward proposals to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to secure sustainable and predictable funding for emergency humanitarian assistance. It had also made proposals on the need for investment in social protection and agriculture in emergencies. The Group of 77 and China hoped that tangible measures would be taken to address the lack of geographical and gender balance within United Nations agencies tasked with humanitarian assistance. It had also hoped that the resolution would urge the international community to provide more financial support to national humanitarian action funds and to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

67. **Ms. Stoeva** (Observer for Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that conflict remained the main driver of humanitarian emergencies, but the resolution failed to express the role of conflict in human suffering. Furthermore, some States rejected the undeniable and scientifically proven exacerbation of weather-related disasters and climate change. A correct diagnosis was a precondition of adequate treatment.

68. The European Union and its member States were concerned at the regression in the discussions on sexual and reproductive health. Given that over 60 per cent of maternal deaths and approximately 45 per cent of infant deaths in 2017 had occurred in countries affected by humanitarian crises, sexual and reproductive health-care services were undoubtedly a life-saving measure. The operationalization of the Minimum Initial Service Package had a direct impact on maternal mortality and morbidity; it was regrettable that the earlier agreement on that point could not be maintained.

69. **Ms. Pritchard** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, welcomed the resolution's strengthened text on the needs of children, older person and persons with disabilities; preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse; and sexual and gender-based violence. She said that while Australia, New Zealand and Canada were pleased that the draft resolution had been adopted by consensus, they were deeply disappointed that previously agreed language on the Minimum Initial Service Package was no longer acceptable to some delegations. In accordance with the Minimum Initial Service Package and other internationally-agreed standards, access to sexual and reproductive health services was critical to the health and well-being of women and girls in humanitarian settings. Furthermore, Australia, New Zealand and Canada understood that the phrase "extremist attacks" in paragraph 30 referred to violent extremist attacks and not to extremist views.

70. **Monsignor Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See) said that there had been several improvements in the text of the resolution. His delegation welcomed the new paragraphs on providing quality education in the context of humanitarian emergencies, the stronger language on child protection, the additional language on barriers faced by persons with disabilities and the recognition of the positive role of older persons and youth. Progress had also been made on the issue of displaced persons. However, his delegation reiterated its reservations on the terms "sexual and reproductive health" and "sexual and reproductive health-care services", which it saw as applying to a holistic concept of health. The Holy See did not consider abortion, access to abortion or access to abortifacients as a dimension of those terms. In addition, the Holy See understood gender to be grounded in biological sexual identity and difference.

71. **Ms. Silva** (Uruguay) said that failure to reach a consensus on the issues that lay at the heart of the resolution, such as access to medical care and sexual and reproductive health-care services, was regrettable. The wording of the reference to the Minimum Initial Service Package that had been removed from paragraph 15 had been identical to that of the previous year's resolution adopted by the same Council members. Her delegation was concerned at the difficulties encountered in strengthening the language and substance of the resolution and at the language on access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, which was a step backward.

72. **Mr. Pronin** (Russian Federation) said that, in future, sessions should be better planned and more time should be allotted to plenary meetings as opposed to panel discussions, as that would give delegations more time to make their statements.

73. **Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria) said that his delegation welcomed the recognition of the plight of internally displaced persons in the context of emergencies, as their issues had long been neglected in the economic and social development agenda. It hoped that action-oriented proposals would continue to be put forward. Nigeria supported the improved language on skill acquisition, vocational education and children's education in emergencies, and the links between those priorities and the urgent need for more funding.

74. The Council should avoid importing divisive language that had not been the subject of intergovernmental negotiations, as that could test members' unanimity of purpose on important humanitarian resolutions. While Nigeria accepted the reference to sexual and reproductive health-care services, it did not consider abortion and access to abortion to be included in such services. Furthermore, Nigeria understood the use of the term "gender" in the text to refer to the purely biological concept and not to the socially-constructed meaning favoured by some.

75. **Mr. Varga** (Observer for Hungary) said that the events of recent years had proved that migration posed serious security challenges. As irregular and mixed migration flows presented major difficulties for countries of origin, transit and destination, international efforts must aim at halting migration flows by prioritizing security considerations. Migration was not a basic human right. However, all persons had the right to live in peace and safety in their homelands; if that were not possible, the international community should help affected communities live a decent life as close to home as possible until they could safely return to their places of origin. Accordingly, under the Hungary Helps Initiative, his Government attempted to provide help where the problem originated rather than bringing the phenomena to countries of transit or destination. It did not support any endeavour that could encourage migration, and the wording of paragraph 32 of the resolution carried that possibility.

76. The singling out of migrants in the resolution added no value, as all persons, regardless of citizenship, must receive assistance in a humanitarian emergency situation. Migrants as a whole were made up of several subgroups, such as women, children and persons with disabilities, whose needs were addressed in the text. Humanitarian assistance in connection with migration and refugees should be confined to the discussion on the global compacts on migration and refugees. In terms of strengthening coordinated international efforts to

address the consequences of humanitarian emergencies, "assistance" and "protection" should refer to members of all vulnerable and marginalized groups or situations.

77. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that his delegation rejected the attempts to muddy the waters through the insertion of the phrase "sexual and reproductive health-care services", which, for the Sudan, did not refer to abortion in any way whatsoever. Introducing terms that promoted abortion went against the spirit of the United Nations. As a country that was host to refugees, the Sudan would continue to work with international organizations to address the issue of migration both domestically and abroad.

Closing of the segment

78. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that failure to protect civilians caught in conflict had resulted in incalculable suffering. Natural disasters affected more than 100 million people every year and tens of millions did not have enough to eat. Humanitarian workers were attacked and harassed, and safe, rapid and unimpeded access to those in need was often denied. As highlighted in the first high-level panel discussion, armed conflict stripped away the layers of protection afforded by families and society, and children faced violence, displacement and separation from family and were vulnerable to being used in hostilities. Education was the least resilient public service during conflicts, and special attention needed to be paid to education for girls and children with disabilities.

79. Although a comprehensive legal framework was in place to minimize the impact of armed conflict on children and civilians, a large gap remained between the law and the reality on the ground. It was critical to engage with all parties to armed conflict to enhance their compliance with the law.

80. While the humanitarian system had improved its ability to respond to extreme weather events and climate change, a more anticipatory approach, backed by forecast-based financing, was needed, especially to avert food crises. That had been the takeaway from the second high-level panel discussion. As emphasized in the final panel discussion, the capacities of local actors should be strengthened, and international engagement should reinforce, not replace, national and local systems.

81. It was significant that the humanitarian affairs segment had been preceded by a side event on the transition from relief to development, emphasizing the importance of overcoming silos, cementing the humanitarian-development nexus and, in general, a stronger joint focus on long-term solutions. That imperative had been illustrated by concrete examples from Somalia - which he and the UNDP Administrator had visited on a joint mission earlier in the year. Progress had been achieved on many of the commitments undertaken at the World Humanitarian Summit but more remained to be done.

82. **The President**, reviewing the panel discussions held during the segment, said that children were among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change and conflict, and their humanitarian needs were inadequately addressed. Millions were malnourished or faced severe food insecurity, and their inability to attend school adversely affected their prospects.

83. Better solutions were needed to counter the growing impact of climate- and disaster-related crises. In 2017, the impact of natural disasters had caused the second-largest economic loss in history. Natural disasters affected over 100 million people annually and were exacerbated by climate change. Every year, livelihoods were eroded or erased by such crises. In order to better prepare for such events, the international community needed to shift from managing crises to mitigating and managing risk. New anticipatory approaches to reducing humanitarian needs were encouraging. In addition, cooperation with local communities and authorities to develop solutions based on existing local mechanisms improved the effectiveness of aid delivery processes.

84. Throughout the panel discussions, there had been a clarion call for promoting human dignity, restoring humanity, reinforcing local actors and communities and driving change through the new way of working. It was crucial that those discussions continued and were translated into concrete actions.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.